USDA NRCS
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Plant Fact Sheet

MAPLELEAF VIBURNUM

Viburnum acerifolium L.

Plant Symbol = VIAC

Contributed by: USDA NRCS National Plant Data Center & the Biota of North America Program

Botany Dept., NMNH, Smithsonian Institution
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Alternate Names
Maple-leaf viburnum, maple-leaved arrow-wood, dockmackie, guelder-rose, possum-haw, squash-berry

Uses
Landscape: Mapleleaf viburnum is a native, thicket-forming shrub long cultivated for its good seasonal displays of creamy flowers, attractive summer leaves, dark mature fruits and reddish-purple fall color. It is adaptable to a wide range of light and soil conditions, is an excellent choice for dry soils in deep shade, and is useful for naturalizing along forest edges, streamsides and lakeshores.
Wildlife: Mature fruits are eaten by a variety of wildlife including mammals, game birds and many species of songbirds. Its low-growing habit provides good nesting and escape cover for birds and small mammals.

Status
Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Description
V. acerfolium is a native, thicket-forming shrub, 4 to 6 feet high and 3 to 4 feet wide. Twigs are pubescent (hairy). Leaves are deciduous and 2-5 inches wide, and most are deeply 3-lobed with coarse teeth on the margins. Lower leaf surfaces have minute black dots, and are nearly smooth to thinly stellate (having star-like tufted hairs). Small creamy-white, bisexual flowers in upright, flat-topped clusters 1-3 inches wide appear May through August. The 1/3-inch to 1/2-inch berry-like drupes are nearly black and appear July through October, often persisting into winter.

Adaptation and Distribution
Mapleleaf viburnum occurs natively on hillsides and ravine slopes, as an understory shrub in upland beech-maple forests of the Northeast and Midwest, and in rich deciduous woods along the Gulf coastal plain. Optimum growth occurs in well-drained, moist soils, with partial shading; however, *V. acerfolium* is tolerant of acid soils, dry sites and deep shade.

Mapleleaf viburnum is distributed throughout the East. For a current distribution map, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Website.

Establishment
Mapleleaf viburnum produces abundant fruit and seed yearly beginning at about 2-3 years of age. Most seeds have an impermeable seedcoat and embryo dormancy that requires a warm-cold stratification sequence for germination. The plant may prove difficult to propagate from seed. Vegetative reproduction is through rhizomes, or softwood cuttings (Dirr and Heuser, 1987).

Management
The plant's suckering habit forms open colonies and it is best in a naturalized setting. In the native landscape, *V. acerfolium* may be damaged and decreased by repeated exposure to fires.

Pests and Potential Problems
The viburnum leaf beetle *(Pyrrhalta viburni*) was introduced from Europe and Asia to North America around 1947 and first became a problem in Canada in 1978. It has now moved to the northeastern United States where it is a concern in urban landscapes and nurseries. *Viburnum acerfolium* leaves can be damaged or skeletonized by the beetle adults and

larvae, though *Viburnum opulus* appears to be the insect's preferred host and is most seriously affected. The beetle larvae hatch in early May, feed for about 4-5 weeks then pupate in the soil. Adults emerge by mid-July, feed, mate, and lay over-wintering eggs in a straight line on viburnum twigs. The over-wintering eggs should be pruned out and destroyed before hatching. Chemical control is best applied to young larvae, which feed on both upper and lower leaf surfaces.

Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)
V. acerfolium cultivars are not readily available.

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Edited 25Jul2002 JLK; 060818 jsp